1: Childs M-5 (1924-1940) 1949 FP 13 Mbundu FP 13

(*c*) *In hunting*, deities other than the king's ancestors were invoked, especially *Hũvĩ*, the hunters' god, and *Kuanja*, a goddess, both of which had their own shrines and priests. These may have been connected with the country or with its earlier inhabitants (the kings being recognized as late comers). At the inaugural hunt the offices were assigned. The king's character was supposedly revealed by the sex of the animal killed at this hunt: 'If the duiker[1] is a female, then it is good indeed, but if a male, then the king is a real person but he habitually will become angry to excess' (*Nda ombambi yaco omange ciwa mutĩlĩ, puaĩ nda ulume, Soma omunu puaĩ o tema tema enene*).

2. *To represent the nation in its external relations*, i.e. (*a*) *To make agreements with other kings to promote trade*, and (*b*) *To make war on other peoples* in order to provide his court with tribute and his warriors with plunder. The war leader (*Kesongo*) had his own residence and establishment entirely separate from that of the king, whom he must not meet face to face except on certain state occasions. In Bailundu he, with certain other officials, was of the stock of the slaves of the state (*ovinduli viosoma*) who came from Luandu in the Songo country. Each king must inaugurate his reign with a war, during or after which he must ceremonially 'eat the old one' (*oku lia ekongo*)—a feast consisting of the flesh of a specially fattened slave cooked with the flesh of the principal animals commonly eaten.

3. *To dispense justice*. In point of time consumed, this question was very important, for it occupied much of the time of both rulers and ruled. Good evidence of this is in the number of proverbs used at court, second only in number to those used for the education of the young. The king's court (*olusenje*) was the supreme court of the nation where cases were continually heard and 'fines eaten' (*oku lia ovimbu*). Cases might be settled either by ordeal or by decision of the king, and there was therefore room for appeal and re-trial. The king's word, however, was final, as the proverb has it: *O popia onganji, o mãlãpo osoma.* (The advocate speaks, the king finishes [decides].) The king was not generally arbitrary in his decisions but was bound not only by the customs of his people, but also by the desires of his councillors. Among the legitimate kings of the Ovimbundu there were comparatively few of the revolting and wholesale punishments which were so

[1] The duiker, *ombambi* (*Silvicapra grimmii leucoprosopus*).

1: Childs M-S (1924-1940) 1949 FP13 Mbundu FP13

Wood-working, including the following specializations:
Doors, windows, and their frames; coffins.
Beds, tables, chairs, &c.
Mortars, pestles, grinding-handles, and handles for various iron implements.
Stools, household utensils, carved images, staves, knobkerries, &c.
Drums and other musical instruments.
Canoes (dug-outs and coracles).
Rope-making, nets, and rudimentary weaving.
Thatching has its specialists although all men can thatch.
Fishing.
Bee-hunting, including the making of hives.
Hunting.
Iron-smelting and smithing.
Medical-practice and Divination.

The last three professions of the list are sacred and are entered under special conditions. They are often passed on by inheritance, but not always. All of them require sacrifice at certain stages, and when the enslavement of a spirit (*oku andeka*) is required, it is socially allowable. This seems to be the case with these offices as with those of the king and his ministers, both because of benefits accruing to the community in their exercise and also because of inherent danger to the individuals who exercise these functions.

The advent of European commerce, industry, and government has created a number of types of employment for boys and young men, some of which entail prolonged absence from the village and a loosening or severing of kinship ties. Church and mission have also offered employment and have opened new opportunities for advance in place and in position.

Later childhood, then, is the period of technical training during which it is expected that a large amount of economic responsibility will be assumed. A child begins to own property even before this, and from the beginning of later childhood will be accounted legally responsible for his actions. It is recognized, however, that he should not be set tasks beyond the experience or ability of his age and that the full responsibility of adulthood will only come with marriage.

***Umãlihĩ ka tonyõlã ongulu yweala*;**
A youth does not scrape the pig for the wedding feast;
***pekonjo pa siala* (*ovonya*).**
on the hoof there remain (bristles).

1: Childs M-S (1924-1940) 1948 FP13 Mbundu FP13

PLATE X

136
224

a. Wounded bull eland (Mainlo)

b. Head of wart hog (Ballundu)

[Facing p. 129]

242 When a field is wearing out, the corn growing shorter and bearing
241 fewer ears to the stalk,(1) the woman makes a final planting of corn, sticking cuttings of manioc between the rows. Most of these cuttings take root and grow. It takes two or three years for the tubers of this plant to mature in an old field, but in some parts of the country where manioc is set in new land it matures within a year. The leaves of the plant are used as a vegetable with corn-meal, and manioc meal is used as a basic substitute when corn is short.

The onaka or river-garden

291 In August a woman plants her onaka, near a stream in the alluvial soil, or in some river bed. Here she plants corn which will be ready for eating during the January period of food shortage, as well as cabbage and other vegetables.

Organization of labour

[463] Formerly men did the heavier work of clearing new fields, although, as has been noted above, since the introduction of wage labour much of the work is left to the women. Men may also have their own fields, the produce of which is sold to provide ready cash to clothe the family, pay taxes etc. The women's fields are intended to feed the family. Children help their parents in the fields, but also have their own plots. Gardens are made by each household, i.e. by each wife where there are a number of wives. Neighbours often co-operate during the harvesting [419] period, after which beer is supplied by the owner of the field which has been harvested.(2)

HUNTING(3)

916 Most men and boys hunt, and women and children may help in burning
234 the grass and driving the game during the annual communal fire-hunts.
[463] But the professional hunter or ohongo is a recognised specialist, quali-
[468] fied by specific training and dependent on his knowledge of hunting magic and ritual for his success. A boy becomes a ohongo by an apprenticeship of about two years to an older hunter. This period culminates in a ceremony of inauguration, which may be attended by all the villagers but at which only the professional hunters dance. Several ohongo provide game, which is cooked for the feast; the dancing commences but the novice remains still and silent until he feels the "spirit of the head"; he then rises and distributes game to the villagers. Blood from the animals killed is sprinkled over his weapons, which have been made by the ohongo who has trained him. From now on his daily life is subject to certain ritual prohibitions: he must not sleep with his wife on the night before going on a hunt, special food and cooking-pots must be used for him, etc.

459 A professional hunter usually works alone, using bows and arrows,

(1) There is no information concerning the length of the farming-cycle.
(2) Childs, personal communication.
(3) See Hambly, *Bunda Studies*, 1934, and Ovimbundu, 1934, pp.180-2. Cashama, 1944, pp.113-39.

A professional hunter usually works alone, using bows and arrows, clubs, spears, and several kinds of trap.(1) Nets and poison are not used. Every hunter makes his own arrow-shafts and feathers; the points are made by a blacksmith. On the night before leaving for a hunt, the okonge calls in his fellow hunters to share a ceremony which includes dancing and the re-anointing of the weapons with beer and palm-oil.

224 ● 411

224

Communal hunts usually take place in June-July, in the middle of the dry season, when large tracts of land are covered with grass ten or more feet high. The day for the hunt is set by the village headman; spears and arrows are prepared and, when the word is given, a party of about 30 men and boys move off to the assigned area of tall grass. A ring is formed round about two square miles of land, the hunters standing just within sight of each other. The grass is trodden down, fires started, and the animals killed as they rush from the flames. Antelope of many kinds, snakes, foxes, wolves, hyenas, mice and rabbits and occasionally leopards are killed in this way.

FISHING

226 462

In the Kasewe and some of the other larger rivers fish are large and plentiful, and men go on communal fishing expeditions, and return with fish to sell.(2) Men usually fish with bark lines, women use basket-traps(3) and poisons. Poison is used, usually in the dry season, when the rivers are shallow. Both men and women use nets, and sometimes a fish-weir or olanja may be employed; this has an opening in the middle, in the lower side of which is placed a basket-trap. At the coast and along the Kasewe river dug-out canoes, about 20-30 feet long, are sometimes used for fishing.(4)

[501]

DOMESTIC ANIMALS

231

The principal domestic animals are the cow (*nyindi*), ox (*ngombe*, which is also the generic name for cattle), bull (*onui*), sheep (*ngwai*), goat (*okombo*), pig (*ongolo*), dog (*ombua*), and chicken (*ocwayi*).(5) The only transport animal is the ox, used both for riding and for drawing carts.(6)

[492]

231 436

Cattle are a measure of wealth, but few families own large herds. Childs lists the domestic animals in a typical village of 196 inhabitants as: 9 head of cattle, 13 goats, 20 sheep, 100 pigs, and about 100 chickens. Cattle are used for paying fines and debts, for funeral feasts, and for marriage payments. Cows are not usually milked, and cattle are killed for food only when they are aged or injured, or occasionally during the June-July period of food shortage. Treated hides are used to cover stools, and for making pouches and carry-bags.(7)

[282]

The cattle herd obtains most of its food by grazing, but in the dry 680

(1) Some hunters have guns, but the use of gunpowder is restricted by the Portuguese.
(2) Cadenas, op.cit., p.142.
(3) See Cadenas, loc.cit., for a brief description of the basket-trap.
(4) Hambly, (1) 1934, p.146.
(5) Ibid., pp.183-6.
(6) Childs, personal communication. Cf. Hambly, op.cit., p.188.
(7) Hambly, op.cit., p.188.

769 They intimate their wishes to their descendants only through slight illness, usually asking for honour to be paid to them by a feast, or by some descendant carrying on their profession.

Ocande is the spirit of the much-honoured founder of the family,(1) and is always beneficent, bringing good-fortune and warning his descendants of danger. Hambly and Tucker agree that *Ekisi* is the same kind of spirit as *Ocande* (although Hambly does not give *Ocande* this special meaning). Tucker writes that *Ekisi* is a benevolent spirit who calls the villagers together at night, and gives them advice through a medium (?), whom he enters without the latter's going into the usual trance. *Kandundu* according to Tucker is an *ekisi* who holds the leading position among the ancestral spirits owing to his seniority. Hambly describes a shrine to *Kandundu* at Bailundu; anyone who sees the contents of the shrine is supposed to become blind. He writes that *Kandundu* is thought of as "the spirit of dreaming who makes swellings on the body", but gives no further explanation. According to Tucker *Kandundu* is an especially powerful *ondele*, and ceremonies performed for him have many distinctive features.

776 769 (778)

Hunt, the spirit of the hunt, has his own shrine and priest in the village of the (permanent?) chief. His hut is very large, since all the meat of the hunts is placed in it. In front of it dances are held, and poles are decorated with skulls and other trophies of hunting. Before the door there is a carved figure of *Samaka*, the spirit who chases the game towards the hunter. A man whose ritual name is *Kapila*, and a woman called *Kunyo*(2) are in charge of the spirit-hut of *Hunt*, and make supplication to him for success in hunting. Hunters living elsewhere but in an ombala or head village do not have persons bearing these ritual names, but their dogs are often called *Hunt*, *Samaka*, *Kapila* or *Kunyo*.

224 776 778 (553)

775 759

The most dreaded spirits are the *otalopakopako*, who may be spirits of still-born babies or foetuses, mental defectives, maltreated slaves, or persons, especially children, killed by sorcery. When a person has been found guilty of killing a child by sorcery or witchcraft, he is sentenced to "restore life" to it, which he does by substituting for it a child from his own family: if the deceased child is a girl, he must give an ox as well. The child is treated with great respect by his new family. If however the parents do not ask the sorcerer or witch for restitution, the child becomes an *otalopakopako*, and may return to "eat" other children, at the command of the sorcerer who has killed it.

RITUAL

793 613

It has been noted that the village headman acts as priest for the *olosi*, the group of paternally-related persons who form the basis of the village group, while the head of the *olosi* acts as priest for his dispersed, maternally-related group.(3) There is little detailed information on the religious duties of these priests. Cashman(4) describes the village headman as making public prayers each morning to Suku. Childs however points out(5) that it is more usual for the headman to spend a

(1) i.e. of either the *olosi* or the *olosi*. (Childs, personal communication)
(2) According to Childs, (1949, p.21) *Kunyo* is a hunting goddess.
(3) See above, p.39.
(4) 1944, p.51. (5) Personal communication.

885 and stability of his personality (*mu* - lit. the quality of being a person) is only proved when he enters the state of adulthood at marriage.

DEATH

361 764 Each village has its own burial ground about a mile or so away. The grave is usually dug by the children of the father's sister.(1) The corpse of a commoner is bound in a supine position and placed in a box before interment. It is usual during the funeral to find out the cause of death, i.e. whether it is the work of spirits or of some living enemy. Accusations of sorcery are frequently made. The corpse in its coffin, slung to a pole between two carriers, responds to questions as to who 'ate him' by forward (affirmative) or backward (negative) movements.(2) In the case described by Hambly,(3) the questions were put by the father's sister. The corpse may also cause its bearers to stop in front of a certain house during the procession through the village, thereby indicating that one of the occupants has caused its death.(4) Should the corpse not give a clear answer, the diviner might be called in to discover the cause of the death. Accusations of sorcery, as has been noted above, are often made within the circle of kin.(5)

Special cases

766 For children the same ceremony was carried out if they were old enough to walk and talk. Otherwise the diviner's services were called upon by the parents. At the death of twins, the mother has to shake a rattle or blow a horn instead of giving the usual greetings to passers-by, as she had to do also while the children were alive.(6)

766 791 At the death of *diviners* and *medicine-men* other members of the profession take charge of the ceremonies. The corpse is tied in a sitting posture and kept thus for three days before burial. No coffin is used. The questioning ceremony is carried out as for a commoner. After the interment the other medicine-men dance "because they have spirit in their heads", and during the dance each eats a living chicken that he carries in his hand. At the side of the grave a dog, a chicken and a goat are killed, and eaten by the mourners. The ocimbundo's power is apparently thought to linger round the grave, which the chief or village-headman may visit to ask for rain and other favours.(7)

227 766 *Hunters* at death are buried in rock tombs (*ombilo* or *ocanjo*), which are usually placed in commanding positions. The skulls of animals which the hunter has killed are piled on top of the tomb. The bows of the deceased hunter are kept in his successor's "house of bows".

766 698 *Chiefs*, and possibly also *village headmen*, are buried in specially-constructed enclosures in the villages over which they ruled. The tomb is a small hut with a substantial wooden door, which is surrounded by a strongly-built wooden fence, or it may be a cave. The wives of the chief are buried in the same enclosure. The head of a specially selected

(1) Hambly, (2) 1934, p.268.
(2) Childs, 1949, p.57.
(3) Op.cit., p.266.
(4) Childs, loc.cit.
(5) Ibid.
(6) Hambly, op.cit., p.269.
(7) Ibid., p.270.

3: Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FF13 Mbundu FF13

175 [316] [305] Serpa Pinto saw shafts for the working of iron ore in the neighborhood of Cubango. The ore was mixed with charcoal and smelted in shallow pits. It is stated that the iron was sometimes tempered with ox-grease and salt. The bellows are of the type made at Elende (I, p. 128). Of the tempering process I have no confirmation.

175 787 [764] Somewhere near Bihé Serpa Pinto saw the ceremony of questioning a corpse which was made to sway to and fro, the people believing all the while that it does so without human intervention. The diviner declared that the soul of a dead person will tell who caused the death (I, p. 130). I observed and photographed this ceremony (Plate XLV, Fig. 1).

[695] The ordeal of the poison cup is described; blood-letting, and divination by shaking articles in a basket are also mentioned. Pinto says that in the articles that appear uppermost the diviner reads what his hearers are desirous of learning of the past, present, or future. Sorcery and rain-making are likewise briefly mentioned (I, p. 132). The divination basket, the poison ordeal, and rain-making, are Umbundu cultural traits today.

171 224 Here Pinto illustrates the existing practice of mounting the skulls of animals killed by a hunter on a pole in the village. There is a further reference to this custom among the Ambuellas (I, p. 333). These instances, combined with those personally noted, give a wide distribution for the practice (I, p. 177).

175 [304] Pinto saw the operation of tooth mutilation among the Luimba. The operation was performed with a knife which was struck by repeated light blows (I, p. 209).

[711] Pinto illustrates arrowheads in use in 1879 (I, pp. 277, 346). These are exactly the same as those made and used in 1929 (Plate XVII, Figs. 1-9).

[412] Axes used by the Luchazi are sketched with a detail that shows the old forms to persist without alteration (II, p. 36).

[321] Water-pipes made from horns and gourds by the Luina of eastern Angola are of the forms now used in that region, also by the Ovimbundu of the present day (II, pp. 33, 37).

175 114 For use in checking and supplementing my observations Serpa Pinto's book was found to be of the greatest service, though the precise locality was sometimes difficult to identify. This explorer, in common with others, scattered his ethnological observations among descriptions of the route and botanical, zoological, and other notes.

Lux traveled from Loanda due east, following the Kwanza on the northern bank between 9° and 10° S. Lat., and so into Lunda.

3. Hambly E-8 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13

114 Umbundu language. The illustrations in photogravure are excellent,
126 but the small-scale map is difficult to follow.

114 As might be expected in a work covering an enormous tract of
241 country, the information is of a very general kind; I have nowhere
224 been able to check in any detail on my own observations. F. and W. Jaspert recognise that Umbundu culture is primarily based on agriculture, maize being the most important crop, but they do not admit the importance of hunting (p. 16).

I saw many successful parties of Umbundu hunters, tested their precision with the bow and arrow, and was able to record the ritual connected with the initiation of a professional hunter. There is also a ceremony before the hunter sets out. It would be more accurate to say that, although Umbundu culture is based primarily on agriculture, hunting still retains some of its earlier importance.

114 The diagrams of houses in different parts of Angola are a useful feature of the work. I made many photographs but did not record details of planning.

114 The masks I obtained are exactly like those pictured, but my
881 observations were carried out a long way to the southeast of the point where the Jasperts touched the Vachokue culture. I do not understand from their description whether the writers saw an initiation ceremony. They state that boys are circumcised and girls are excised when very young, even at the age of five or six years. I observed initiation camps and dances at three centers, Ngalangi, Katoko, and Cangamba; the last named is the main center of Vachokue culture. The male novices varied in age from twelve to sixteen years hence they were older than the novices mentioned by the Jasperts. I was informed that there were no excision operations for girls, though at Ngalangi, Vanyemba girls were secluded in the bush during initiation rites lasting for a month.

Bibliographical references to the research of H. Baumann will be found useful for comparative study. His detailed record of initiation among the Vachokue is valuable as a check on my observation, as we worked independently in areas separated by several hundred miles.

Consultation of historical sources gives the following answers to questions which were asked as an introduction to this chapter.

174 On the grounds of tribal tradition, historical evidence, and cultural affinities, the original home of the Ovimbundu was likely to have been in the southwest Congo. The Ovimbundu undoubtedly possess important cultural traits that have been characteristic of the southern Congo region from the earliest time for which a record exists.

Jr Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13

maker's dance seen at Ngongo, a village of Ngalangi in east-central Angola, will be described in dealing with the *ocimbanda* (chapter IX). 821

No man thinks that the course of the sun can be altered, but there seems to be a hope that the setting of the sun may be delayed. A man who is likely to be overtaken by darkness breaks a piece from an ant hill. This fragment is placed in the forked branch of a tree while the supplicant says, "Sun, wait a little while for me." (766)

Months are reckoned by observation of the moon. The new moon is *ceesi* ("moon") *gokolige* ("new"). There is no word for half moon. The phrase for full moon is *ceesi ya tunga okumbo*. *Okumbo* means "basket"; therefore the idea appears to be that the full moon is round like the big basket used for field work.

A star is called *olombungululu*. To describe a shooting star, the word *luenda* ("it goes") is added. The large bright morning star is *tanda*. Another bright star is *tielela*. Three bright stars in a line are the hunter, the dog, and the quarry. The three stars are *ukongo* ("hunter"), *lombua* ("the dog"), *lociapuwa* ("the animal").

An eclipse of the sun is *utoke wutongo*. The former word means "night," the latter word means "daylight." Hence the meaning is "night in daylight."

Small mammals are captured in cane traps or stunned with blunt wooden arrows. The pursuit of such animals is a pastime for boys who thereby receive their early training in hunting. Rats are used as food after being boiled and roasted. This fact accounts for interest in the following small mammals. 224 825 [262]

Umbili. This is a big black river rat, the largest of the water rats.

Ocifolefole. A big gray water rat (*Cricetomys?*), not so large as *umbili*.

Kalelo. A river rat something like the preceding one in appearance. *Kalelo* can stay in the water for a longer period than that endured by *ocifolefole*.

Epolo. This is a bush rat which is light gray in color.

Ekolongonjo. This rat stays in the bush. It builds a nest in an ant hill from which it comes out only at night. The color is gray.

Elima (*Epomophorus*). This is the name given to the fruit bat. The word *elima* means "not one thing and not another." Thus *elima* is the word applied to a mulatto; he is not a Negro, not a white man.

Ocili (*Rhabdomys*). This is a large light brown mouse having white stripes on his back.

Ongongo. A mouse.

Epongwa. A black rat.

Ocipili. A mouse with a long thin nose; probably a shrew.

Ocinge. This is a very fat mouse.

Nakolongoka. This very small mouse makes a hole around which he pile grass to conceal the entrance.

Ocipombolobolo (*Lemniscomys*). A mouse with a stripe on his back.

Kandeti (*Dendromus*). A very little mouse something like *nakolongoka*.

3: Hambly 8-8 (1929-1953) 1954 FP13 Mbundu FP13

the tree in order to lower the hive with a long rope of bark or plaited fiber, while beneath the tree men are prepared to take the hive, which is opened over a smoky fire. The men wear no protection, consequently they are badly stung. Boys are encouraged to help, and those who run away receive no honey. Honey may be eaten alone or with manioc. No drink is made from honey only, but ocksas is the name given to beer with honey in it. Ovingundu is a drink made from pounded corn which has been soaked in water to which a little honey has been added. The drink is allowed to remain untouched over night; thus it becomes sweet and is mildly intoxicating. 231 263 273

Wax is a very important item of trade. In the remote places natives bring to small trading posts balls of wax which are about two pounds in weight. These in former days were a standard of exchange in terms of which other values could be measured. These balls of wax are made into large cakes for foreign export. In the Ekale country a fiber strainer is used for cleaning the wax. Honey is sometimes dried in very large baskets which are three feet in diameter and two inches deep. These baskets were not observed among the Ovimbundu, but they are used in the region of Cassanga in southern Angola. The honey of wild bees when eaten in the comb is palatable; it would be more so if one could disregard the presence of numerous dead bees. 439 257 [430]

The bow is the chief weapon of the hunter. The release of the arrow is made with the index and middle fingers (Plate XXXIX, Fig. 1). I have observed this method among the Ovimbundu of the Benguela Highlands, in the region of Kipungo, in the far south among the Vakuanyama, and among the Vaxale of the Novo Redondo hinterland. Arrows differ considerably in pattern as the illustrations show (Plate XVII, Figs. 1-8); the Ovimbundu have arrow-points of excellent workmanship. The manufacture of these arrow-points is one of the most skilled occupations of the blacksmith. Each man makes his own shafts and feathers them. The arrows of the Vaxale have leaf-shaped iron points; so also have those used by the Vakuanyama. 411 171 224 [326]

Among the Ovimbundu are specialists who make bows from elastic woods called usia and ocombia. The bow itself is ohonji and the arrow is usongo. At the third shot I saw a young Ovimbundu boy split a cane which was placed upright at a distance of thirty-three feet. The throwing club (okunga) is used for killing small game such as hares. [463]

3: Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13

411 [237] The only spear (*usapa*) that I have seen is made entirely of iron. The shaft is covered with the tail of an ox to which the tuft of hair remains attached. This is the spear formerly used in warfare. The distribution is wide. Such spears were purchased from the Ovimbundu of Elende and Bailundu and also from the Vakuanyama [439] living in the far south of Angola, but I do not think that the Ovimbundu make these spears, which are probably traded from the south.

229 (411) A hunter is considered exceptionally fortunate if he possesses an old muzzle-loading gun (*uta*). I have seen only two hunters who owned such a weapon. In one instance the barrel was bound to the stock with hide thongs, while the woodwork was decorated with brass tacks. Powder and fragments of metal are carried in a leather pouch which is attached to a broad, leather waist belt (Plate XIII, Fig. 6). There is certainly a feeling among hunters that the sale of a well-tried weapon will be followed by bad luck. The gun is sometimes fixed to form a trap in such a way that an antelope may tread on the string and so discharge the gun. Sometimes a piece of meat is attached to a string which is fastened to the trigger. A heavy beam of wood into which an iron spike is fastened was used in districts where the hippopotamus and elephant were hunted. Such a trap was fixed over a path known to be frequented by these animals. Big game of this type is now rare.

In the Esele country the following traps are in use: (1) A deep, narrow, grass-covered pit from the bottom of which sharp stakes project upward; this trap is known as *okuese*. (2) A simple trap consisting of four long sharp stakes which are fixed in the ground so that they incline toward a gap through which a buck is likely to jump (Plate LXXIII, Fig. 2). (3) The trap (*ocisonga*) for lions and leopards. This is a heavily built structure provided with a panel-like door which slides down when the entering animal releases a cord fastened to the bait (Plate XCII, Fig. 2). (4) A heavy trap triangular in form. This trap is not an enclosure, but a covering under which the animal has to go in order to reach the bait. In addition to the foregoing examples there is a trap (*onjanjo*) which is used for snaring antelope. The essential of the device is a loop which is bound to the end of a supple branch lightly fastened to the ground. This, however, did not come under my observation.

Long, cone-shaped, cane structures are placed in the grass, which is then fired. Animals disturbed and frightened by the fire rush into the wide end of the trap, then make their way to the narrow end (Plate XV, Fig. 5). One such trap is modified to form a snare with

3: Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13

a noose which hangs over the entrance. From Ngalangi I obtained 224
a trap formed by suspending a heavy block of wood inside a box. The animal enters a small circular hole, passes under the heavy block and begins to nibble the grain which is strewn on the bottom of the box. Presently he releases a fine string which brings down the block in such a way that he is pinned underneath. I am informed that this trap is used at Elende, but I have not seen it there.

Some hunters note the feeding and drinking places of their quarry, which is shot from a hiding place in a tree. Young animals may be run down by a hunter in open chase. Screens are not carried in front of a hunter, but he does sometimes dress in the skins of animals. His disguise is completed by wearing a tuft of the animal's hair on his head.

Dogs are used for tiring out young animals in the chase, and also for catching hares. There is a tendency at the present time to improve the breed of native dog by crossing with a large hunting [232]
dog from South Africa. In the Esele country I have seen, high on a granite rock, a small cairn of stones which covered the skull of a famous hunting dog. Dogs are used most commonly when the hunt is communal (Plate XXIII, Fig. 1), but the best hunters work alone without the aid of dogs. In the general hunt women and children may take part in driving the game; often a fire is started in the grass, which is very dry in the months of June and July. A hunter who works alone may excite the curiosity of an animal by blowing through a horn of an antelope. Spider's web covers the wide end of the horn.

I have observed a general hunt in which thirty men and boys participated, each carrying a bow and arrows. The party was accompanied by many dogs. The antelope which had been killed was carried on a pole slung on the shoulders of two men. There was intense excitement as the troop advanced toward their village, shouting and jumping. In another hunt of this kind muzzle-loading guns were carried. The Ovimbundu do not use nets in hunting, neither do they poison animals. Decoy animals are not used, but in the large wooden trap (*ocisonga*) a living goat or pig is placed.

It is necessary to distinguish between hunting as a general pas- [461]
time, in which all males, and even women and children join to a certain extent, and the hunting of animals by a professional hunter. The professional hunter is usually called *okongo* (less frequently *ongonga*); but there is no name for the non-professional hunter. A 874
boy who wishes to become a professional hunter has to serve for a 224
time with an *okongo* before he himself receives this title. There is

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224 874 an initiation feast when the training is ended. At the feast all people of the village may be present but they do not dance; only the professional hunters may do so. The boy who is to be initiated must not speak or move until he "feels the spirit on his head"; then he gives meat to the people. After hunters have captured game for the feast, the blood from these animals is used to smear over the bow, arrows, and spear which have been made for the novice by his tutor. [326] This is analogous to the initiation of the young blacksmith who receives blood-sprinkled tools made by the master blacksmith.

224 788 There is in connection with the life and death of the professional hunter a certain amount of ritual and precaution. The night before setting out to hunt is a time of dancing and renewal of the implements of the chase, which are kept in a house specially prepared for them. A hunter who is on the eve of departure calls in other professional hunters to share the ceremony, which includes the rubbing of the bows and other implements with palm oil. A libation of beer is poured on the bows, spears, and arrows, but no medicine-man is present. Some of the bows are never used, because they are merely the symbols of the personality and prowess of dead hunters whose names they have taken. The food and cooking pots of a hunter must never be associated with those of ordinary household use. If a hunter is following the tracks of an animal he must not point with his finger as this action will drive the animal away. The correct way to point is by use of the feathered end of an arrow. The hunter [804] must not sleep with his wife the night before setting out in quest of game.

224 782 I have frequently seen in front of the hut of a hunter a number of skulls of antelope and other animals mounted on poles arranged in circular formation (Plate XXXII, Fig. 2). These skulls seem to be trophies, which are invariably taken away by the hunter if he finds a new home. There is no reason to doubt the statement that these skulls are an offering to the spirits who give good luck in hunting, because such a belief would be in harmony with the general respect for ancestral ghosts, which are thought to influence the affairs of the living.

764 224 On several occasions, notably near Ganda and in the Cassonge country, I have seen the tombs of hunters. These are large structures built of slabs of granite laid with some symmetry. The rock tomb is invariably placed on the top of a commanding eminence of granite. The skulls of animals which the hunter has killed are piled on the top of the cairn, but I do not know whether these are the trophies

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which are fixed on poles in front of the hunter's home during his lifetime (Plate XXXII, Figs. 1, 2).

There are at the funeral of a hunter special observances which will be mentioned under the heading of funeral rites.

FISHING

In the region of Elende there is fishing with both basket and line; a method of poisoning fish is also practised. Usually a male fishes with a bark line. Women catch fish by the poisoning method, and in addition to this they generally follow the procedure in which baskets are held or weighted in the stream. If the water flows swiftly men may take charge of the fishing operations. At times both men and women fish with nets. Husband and wife may not sleep together the night before fishing, as this is believed to make the male and female fish stay together at the bottom of the river.

The fishing line consists of tough green bark which is cut into strips whose length depends on the height of the river's bank. A hole is bored through the body of a grasshopper, a worm, or a grub taken from under the bark of a tree. Through this hole is passed a short stiff piece of grass about half an inch long, to which the line is attached. The fish is caught when the crosspiece of sharp grass becomes fast in its throat.

When the fisher throws the line he sings: "O fish, come and take your good thing. Do not send the little fish to spoil the good thing. Better you come and take the good thing with all your strength."

In order to make fish poison the tuberous roots of a plant are taken and soaked in water until a scum rises to the top. The solid part of the poison is not given, because it would sink and the fish which ate it would remain at the bottom of the river. Therefore only the scum of this poisonous infusion is thrown in the water. The stupefied, gasping fish remain at the surface, whereupon they are seized by women who transfer them to gourds or baskets worn around their necks. Usually poison is used only in the dry season when the rivers are shallow.

Sometimes there is fishing by means of a weir (*olunja*) which has an opening in the middle. On the lower side of this gap a basket trap is placed.

There is no fishing by torchlight. At the coast, and along the river Kwanza I have seen heavy dugout canoes in use; these were about twenty to thirty feet long and hollowed from single trees (Plate LXXII, Figs. 1, 2). At Ambrizette I noted the use of a fishing

VII. EDUCATION

Industrial Training and Division of Labor

871 Usually there is no formality connected with the industrial and occupational training of Ovimbundu children. The section dealing with play shows that boys and girls learn by spontaneous imitation of their elders.

874 There are, however, exceptions to this general truth. Special rites connected with the training and inauguration of blacksmiths and hunters have been described. The training of medicine-men and women will be dealt with in chapter IX, "Religion."

462 463 In describing economic life in chapter V, division of labor on a sex basis; also specialization in industry because of peculiar tastes and aptitudes, were noted. There is clearly a twofold division in industrial life. In the first place sex determines occupation, and within this primary grouping there is a secondary grouping depending [467] on personal preference and individual ability. I have found no instance of exclusive hereditary right to any occupation or industry.

462 The net result of the Umbundu system of division of labor is indicated by the following summary:

[342] When building houses, men dig the rectangular trench, cut the poles for the framework, lash the crosspieces, cut grass and lay the thatch, then place clay over the wattle walls. Women carry water for mixing the clay and convey the moist clay to the plasterers. [224] Children puddle the clay with their feet. Males are hunters both professional and general. During a communal hunt women and children assist in driving game, which is frightened by the firing of [857] grass. Boys organize games in which they imitate these activities. [226] Men fish with a line and bait, whereas women use baskets and [231] narcotic poison. Men and boys take care of cattle and have charge of dogs. Women and girls give what slight attention is afforded to other domestic animals. Male specialists castrate bulls and goats.

[241] During agricultural operations men clear the ground and burn the bush. Women carry on hoe cultivation without assistance from [482] men. Men are the chief carriers in caravans, but women and children may sometimes be seen carrying loads. They march in line with the men but have smaller burdens. Males are employed in blacksmith's work, wood-carving, making weapons and tools, weaving mats, dressing hides, spinning cotton, and formerly in weaving on an upright loom. Men are exclusively the makers of

535 Almost every evening one may hear the tapping of drums and the songs of dancers, because in addition to dances for a funeral or other special occasion there are ordinary dances of amusement in which lines of men and women advance and retreat, or men and women circle round the drums making arm movements accompanied by a swaying rhythm.

[243] The dance *onyaco*, performed in June when the corn is ripe, may have an ancient history and special significance as part of an agricultural rite. When corn is being stored the people sing, "There is grain in the house, may it never be out." There is no dance in [226] connection with fishing.

224 There is mimicry of animals in the hunting game played by boys. The frog, the leopard, and other animals are imitated in certain games, but I have no evidence of the performance of mimetic dances in relation to any cult for increasing the supply of animal life.

535 The use of the small ball *ombunje* illustrates the way in which [534] an apparent toy can be used in rites of a religious kind. *Ombunje* consists of a hard spherical fruit about six centimeters in diameter in which several hard seeds rattle. The sphere is covered with a layer of cloth over which lizard skin is stretched and sewn.

[769] When the people wish to commemorate the death of a king, or [789] when the king is sick, the medicine-man (*ocimbanda*) says that there must be *osaka* dancing. A strong man dances for many hours while holding this little ball in his outstretched hand. Other men who are dancing use their fists to hit the muscles of the outstretched arm in an attempt to make the holder drop the ball (*ombunje*). If he does so another man will promptly take hold of it. The precise nature of the endurance test is unexplained, but there is possibly the idea of giving strength to a sick king by this tension and endurance. My interpreter thought this was so, but could not explain why the dance should be performed to commemorate the death of a king. It would seem natural, however, to transfer the *ombunje* rite to a commemorative festival, if in the first place it was part of the last rites of a dying king.

534 There are among the Ovimbundu specialists in dancing, singing, 463 and the playing of musical instruments. *Onjimbi* is the word for a singer of merit who starts the choruses. *Ocili* is a dancer of more than ordinary skill. When a man is required to play a drum or other instrument I have noticed that it is thought necessary to bring a specialist. There is no doubt that drumming requires special aptitude and practice. The man who plays the long drum is *usiki*, the drum

766 643 of a dead king would in former times be taken at night by chiefs and interred in one of the caves which are numerous in the rugged hills of the Benguela Highlands. The burial posture for a king is the same as that described for a medicine-man. The severed head is eventually kept in a box, but primarily both head and body are buried, though in separate places. At the end of a year the head is dug up and transferred to its casket.

765 643 Mourning for a king lasts for seven days, during which his children and wives wear strips of oxhide on their left wrists. The village chiefs gather to choose a king from the "blood of kings," though "sometimes a bad man will make himself king without waiting to be chosen." The choice should be in favor of the oldest son of the chief wife, "but if she has stupid sons, a son of another wife of the king will be chosen."

769 643 Sometimes during drought chiefs and their wives go to the grave of a chief where they say, "If you are angry tell us what you want. If you want an ox we will kill one." If they visit the tomb of a king, the king's corpse is asked, "Do you want a new box for your head? We will make one." The oldest chief takes from the tomb the box which contains the head. This is slung on a pole supported on the shoulders of two boys. The head is then questioned in the way described for the funeral of a commoner. The oldest chief offers a sacrifice, if such procedure is demanded by a forward swing of the pole which supports the casket containing the king's head.

768 643 The house is not burned after a death has occurred within, but it is still customary to take down the surrounding fence and to build a new one. The house in which death took place is then used as before. I was informed at the capital of Ngalangi, and by the king himself, that he must continue to use the house of former kings until the structure collapses. No repair work may be done; consequently the house was in a dilapidated condition. Some months after receiving this account at Elende I was in Moxico, several hundred miles away, and learned that at Cangamba the custom of severing the head of a king by suspension and friction prevails in the manner described above.

HUNTERS

224 766 While traveling in the district of Ganda, likewise in the Vasele country in the hinterland of Novó Redondo, one cannot fail to notice the presence of rock tombs (*ombilia* or *osonjo*) which are mausoleums of hunters. These are invariably placed in commanding

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positions on domes of rock. The first tomb examined was in Ganda (Plate LXXIV, Fig. 1). This tomb is carefully built up from pieces of granite detached from the rocks which serve as a base. Horns of animals are placed on the cairn which is further decorated by a stick bearing the tail of an animal. Plate XXXII, Fig. 1, shows a tomb of similar structure in the country of the Vasele. From one such tomb it was possible to detach a slab so that the interior could be seen. There were two male skeletons; one lay supine while the bones of the other were in disorder.

In a hunter's house of bows there are implements of deceased hunters, whose ceremonies centering in these relics have been described under the heading of hunting.

TRAINING OF MEDICINE-MEN

Training for the position of male or female magician (*ocimbanda*) is not carried out with formality ending in initiatory rites, neither is the position hereditary; but the boy or girl who wishes to become an *ocimbanda* must have "spirit in the head." This choice of children of peculiar neurotic temperament for the positions of medicine-men and medicine-women is widely distributed, as I have shown in some detail (Origins of Education, 1926, pp. 256–259).

Among the Ovimbundu there does not appear to be an intensifying of natural psychoses by seclusion, starvation, or beating. When a boy is sick, the medicine-man says, "You have a spirit who wants you to be *ocimbanda*." The medicine-man kills a dog, a goat, and four chickens, then the boy has to accompany his master, carrying his apparatus and obeying him in every way. The medicine-man says, "Your father was an *ocimbanda* and the spirit wants you." The female *ocimbanda* is called *cambula* by other women, and her services are preferred to those of the male *ocimbanda* in cases of difficult childbirth.

In Ngalangi I was informed that the Ovimbundu have great faith in the medicine-men of the Vangangella, a name vaguely applied by the Ovimbundu to several tribes of east-central Angola. An Ocimbundu will make a journey of several days in order to visit a distant medicine-man of another tribe.

FUNCTIONS OF MEDICINE-MEN

Magical practices are of two kinds, social and anti-social. The man who carries out divination, rain-making, healing the sick, and many other functions is *ocimbanda*, while the secret worker of evil, the witch or wizard, is *onganga*. In one village there may be several

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171 411 The question of arrow release is important in this connection. R. B. Dixon (The Building of Cultures, p. 131), while discussing evidence from Wissler, Kroeber, and Morse, has plotted a map showing the distribution of types of arrow release in all parts of the world. The Ovimbundu (Plate XXXIX, Fig. 1) use the Mediterranean release, which is shown by Kroeber (Univ. Calif. Pub., XXIII, p. 286) to occur in the southwest Congo region along with the tertiary release. My illustration and Kroeber's description of the Mediterranean release show that the thumb is kept entirely out of the way. The string is engaged by the inner surfaces of the tips of the index and middle fingers. The engaging finger-ends are at right angles to the string.

Young boys often use the primary release when shooting blunt wooden arrows at birds. In this release the butt of the arrow is clasped between the end of the thumb and the middle knuckle of the index finger. Kroeber remarks that the primary release is almost invariably attempted by children and uninstructed novices, which accords with my observations made in Angola. Presumably boys of the Ovimbundu change their method of release from the primary to the Mediterranean when they handle a man's bow and arrows. The Mediterranean release was observed throughout Angola, with the exception of the primary release employed by boys.

G. Lindblom (I, Part I) assists in comparing hunting apparatus of the Ovimbundu with a large number of African forms.

The throwing clubs of the Ovimbundu are definitely like those of the Hottentots, Barotse, and Bushmen (pp. 120–126).

224 171 In Part II of his leaflet Lindblom discusses many kinds of traps. The trap built of heavy poles, which is used for catching lions, leopards, and hyenas, is used all over Negro Africa; there is nothing distinctive in the form and use of the Umbundu pattern. The cane rat trap of conical form is described and its distribution is plotted (pp. 52, 53, 56). Lindblom's map shows a clustering round the mouth of the Congo, also again at Long. 30° E. and Lat. 10° S. The blank for Angola can now be filled. These traps are used in many parts of Angola, notably among the Vasele of the northwest, at Elende, Ngalangi, and Cangamba. The use of this trap in Angola explains its presence among the Vakuanyama. On Lindblom's map the occurrence of the trap in south Angola is isolated from the general African distribution, but use of the trap is really continuous from the Congo estuary through Angola to the Vakuanyama.

3: Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13

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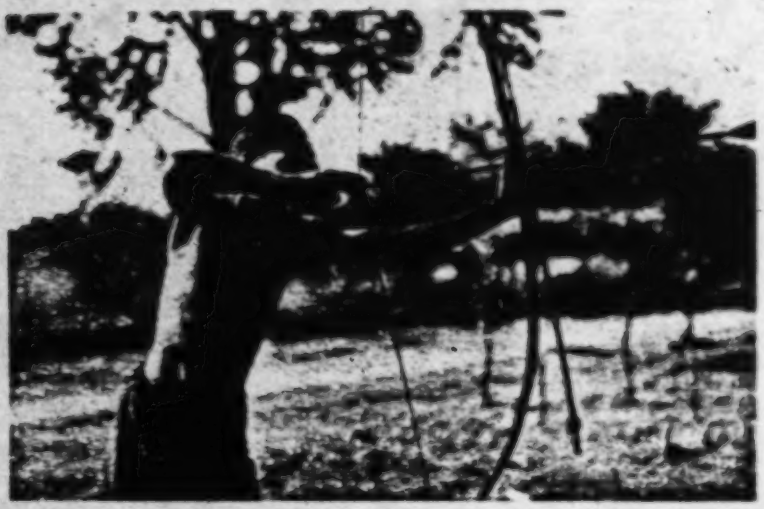

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OVIMBUNDU, ELENDE

Fig. 1. Hunter. Fig. 2. Woman making coiled basket

[p.393]

Hambly E-6 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13

[124.8]

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2

FISHING AND HUNTING

Fig. 1. Fishing spear, Ambriszitz, northwest Angola. Fig. 2. Stakes for impaling antelope, Vasolo, west-central Angola

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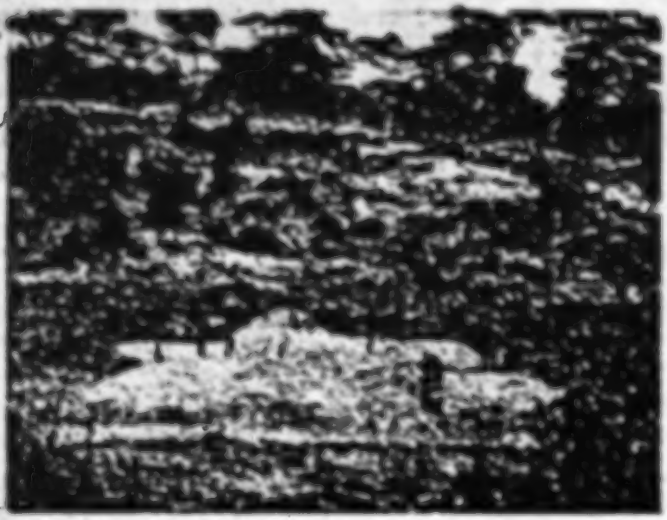

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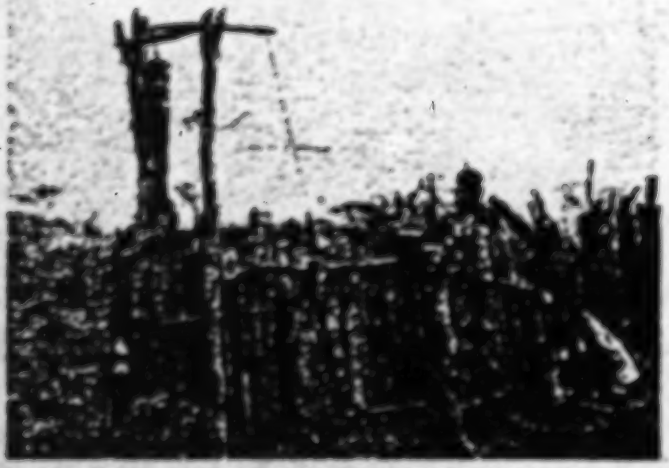

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MAGIC AND HUNTING, CENTRAL ANGOLA

Fig. 1. Mound where children women are armed with seed to give fertility, Viyanguilo, Upland

Fig. 2. Trap for leopards, Cangumbo

[p.446]

5: Hambly E-5 (1929-30) 1934 FP 13 Mbundu FP13

824 825 semblance for a time caused confusion in my mind, were well known to be distinct; though occasionally a prolonged and serious argument would arise among the old men respecting the correct Umbundu names for two similar snakes.

The cries of birds are interpreted in terms of human conversation: thus the female hornbill says to her mate, "I'm going; I'm going; I'm going to our village;" to which the male replies, "Don't go. The rain has come; let us plant." Another bird says, "Where will the guests stay? where? where? where?" This is an intimation that strangers will visit the village. All animals play a part in folk stories: human beings when introduced are usually of secondary importance.

Nature lore is, of course, fundamental to industries, since the artisans must know the best timbers for particular purposes. Thus certain woods yield the best charcoal for a blacksmith's forge; other woods are essential for house building because the timbers resist attacks of termites; again certain trees yield bark for making rope; while other woods are used for carving animals and household utensils.

[462] I am not sure of the extent to which women participate in nature lore; but certainly their knowledge cannot equal that of the men, since women are concerned chiefly with agriculture, domestic work, care of children, and collection of firewood. Yet women and little children are collectors. I have seen many of them together gathering caterpillars which are to be made into soup. Women know the plants that will yield dyes for basketry, and from women some of the bird calls were obtained. The conversation of men bears on their occupations and the nature lore fundamental to these; therefore women must learn, though perhaps only by unconscious absorption.

224 In connection with a study of food supply the occupation of hunting comes most closely to the general nature lore mentioned above. Here a distinction should be made between hunting as a general occupation for males, and hunting by a professional who gives his life to the work. The only occasion on which women and children assist hunters is during a communal hunt, when all the inhabitants of a village fire the dry grass and aid in the capture of game by shouting and driving the frightened animals.

A professional hunter is usually called okongo, more rarely onyanga. The occupation is not hereditary. A boy has to serve two years with a professional hunter before his initiation. The principal guests at the initiation feast are professional hunters, who alone may dance, though a miscellaneous company is present. The boy who seeks initiation is required to keep quite still until he feels the "spirit on his head;" then he distributes meat to the people present. The meat used at the feast is that of antelope shot by

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A. Rock tomb of a headman near Cuanda, west-central Angola. The entrance to the tomb is on the right. B. Tomb of a headman near Luimbale, west-central Angola. Trophies of the chase are on the posthold. (Photographs by courtesy of Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago.)

[Facing p. 158]

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professional hunters, and the smearing of the novice's bow and arrows with blood from the meat is an important point of ritual. The bow and arrows are made by the master for his pupil; a practice strictly analogous to the making of tools for a young blacksmith by the master who has trained him.

In connection with the life and death of a hunter a certain amount of ritual survives, and this despite long European contacts, game laws, and the development of an economic system based primarily on extensive cultivation of maize and beans. But though these circumstances might tend to discourage hunting and its attendant ritual, other facts have contributed to survival. An embargo on guns and powder has led to prolonged use of bows and arrows, with which all hunters are expert, though some, despite official prohibition, have muzzle loading guns. Bows are in general use, and their continuance has no doubt aided survival of ritual, since the rites themselves are closely associated with the bows.

The night before a professional hunter sets out is an occasion for renewal of implements of the chase, that is, renewal in a spiritual sense, by a ceremony designed to transfer power in a magical way from the disused weapons of deceased hunters to the weapons in use. Weapons of dead hunters are kept in a small hut to which a hunter repairs on the eve of departure. He rubs the old weapons (bows, clubs, and spears) with palm-oil; then pours over them a libation of beer. No medicine-man is present, so for the occasion a hunter functions as his own priest.

It is hazardous and perhaps unprofitable to attempt an analysis of the philosophy behind these ritual acts. Yet the weapons are symbols of the personality and prowess of dead hunters whose names they have received. Therefore the suggestion that the hunter is acquiring power from the dead is reasonable, and the idea harmonizes with all that is known of ancestor worship among Bantu tribes.

The food and cooking pots of a hunter must never be associated with those of ordinary household use. If a hunter is following the tracks of an animal he may not point with his finger, since this action will drive the animal away. He may, however, point with the feathered end of an arrow. A dog must have his ears clipped in a peculiar way or he will not hear and obey. A hunter may not sleep with his wife the night before setting out in quest of game. Before leaving home a hunter washes his eyes with a concoction of herbs to give greater acuity of vision.

In any village the hut of a professional hunter can be readily distinguished by a number of poles erected near the entrance. On these supports are placed the skulls of animals killed in the chase. A traveler cannot fail to notice the trophies of hunting, which consist of twines of gourds enclosing a

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hollow chamber. I removed a thin slab of stone which formed an entrance to a tomb of this kind and observed within two skeletons lying supine. On the top of the cairns were skulls of animals killed by the hunter. I noted one instance of the burial of a hunter's dog under a cairn of stones.

Three birds are protected by a prohibition. Esuvi is a bird which has power to steal the souls of the dead, so making them die a second death. As usual, no direct explanation was given concerning this second death, but an explanation came later, quite fortuitously. For instance, an old man said he was sick because esuvi had stolen the spirit of his grandfather. This statement is logical, since welfare depends on a beneficent interest of dead ancestors, and it is evident that dying a second death prevents a spirit from exercising a benign influence over the living. Other protected birds are one which supplies feathers from which the decorations of kings and medicine-men are made, and one whose night cry is a warning of death in a village.

In fishing, a division of labor is recognized: men use a rod and line, while women drag baskets against the stream or use poison in slow, shallow water. The night before poison is to be used for fishing, husband and wife must avoid intercourse, since intimacy of this kind would make the fish stay together at the bottom of the river. A man who has prepared his rod and line, by transfixing a grasshopper and attaching it to a thin piece of bark, sings a song which is of the nature of a spell. He says:

> "O fish come and take your good thing.
> Do not send the little fish to spoil the good thing.
> Better you come and take the good thing with all your strength."

Up to half a century ago the Ovimbundu were renowned traders whose caravans penetrated deeply into the Congo region and even to the east side of Africa. It is natural, therefore, that some ritual should be connected with such an important enterprise. At the present day caravans may be seen, but these are local, and most of the carriers are found to be taking their maize, beans, and beeswax to traders' stores. I believe women did not accompany the transcontinental caravans of early days, but today women may be seen in line with the other carriers. Their loads are lighter, being on the average thirty pounds as compared with sixty pounds for a man. Children also carry small loads in the caravan.

Ngonga, my chief informant, said that in former times no caravan leader would set out without having consulted the preserved head of a deceased king. Even at present the corpse of a king is suspended by the neck and twisted until the head is severed. The head is sewn in oxhide and preserved in a box. The ancient caravan custom consisted of taking the box

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might be told that he lived elsewhere. This would turn out to be a reference to the government headman. A request for the *sekulu* (literally elder father, hence elder or headman) might also bring me in contact with the 'elder of the school', the representative of the local Christians. I therefore began to ask for 'the old one' (*sekulu*), or to inquire 'Who built first?' or 'Who settles disputes?', when I wanted to find out who was the traditional headman.

Even these questions did not necessarily get a clear answer. Thus the village of Kamupa had been founded by Lusase, its government headman was Guilherme, and, as neither of these was living near, minor disputes were referred to two old men who lived in the village. Apart from the government headmen, there are also traditional headmen recognized by the post, who did not have the privileges and the duties of the former. It may happen in a particular village that the man recognized as traditional headman by the post is not the same person as the real traditional headman recognized by the village. This was the case in Epalanga, where Sapapula was unquestionably the headman recognized by the villagers but the duties of dealing with policemen fell to Luanga. In the local discussions as to the recruitment of road-workers, and so on, Sapapula had much more influence than Luanga.

The position of the traditional headman nowadays lacks clearly defined powers, or symbolic value. A village is frequently known by its founder's name. The headman is the only person who can speak of 'my village' as opposed to 'our village'.[19] The firing of the long grass in the dry season which marks the beginning of the great communal hunts is theoretically begun by the village headman, though this is not always adhered to in practice. The headman does not take any active part in leading the hunt, nor are the people who go on a communal hunt necessarily confined to the inhabitants of one village. He has 'to show land' to new-comers to the village. This reflects a moral responsibility to his people rather than control of land tenure, since there is always spare land away from the villages which anybody can cultivate. He also has the responsibility of hearing minor disputes. He receives from the

[19] Ibid., pp. 36–37.

maize from these beds is for home consumption, and it comes at a time when maize supplies are running low, and some people have to rely on manioc. The *embanda* type is sown in September and early October. Then the main fields (*ovalye*, plural of *elye*) are sown in October and November, and only after this is maize sown in the gardens round the houses. In December and January the people are busy hoeing the fields and in February the sowing of beans takes place, continuing into March. This is followed by the harvesting of the gardens in the village, and by the gathering of the maize in the fields, the maize then being placed in field huts to dry. This takes place in March and April, and with its ending the dry season has come.

The dry season is the time for travelling to see relatives and for getting married, since the burden of work is much reduced. May is a good time to clear the bush and then and in later months there is time to build houses. During the dry season there was much more chance of finding people at home, and there were far more festive occasions. This is also a time when men and women can practise crafts such as basketry, fish-trap making, pottery, and so on. In July, the maize dried in the field hut is pounded and brought back to the village, whence it is taken to the traders for sale. The pounding and carrying is often the work of parties of friends and relatives who are rewarded with beer. Occasionally somebody's maize is collected like this well into September, but most people finish in August.

By August the grass has grown very high, and the firing of it is the beginning of large-scale hunts in which men and boys from several villages may join together. Hunts may be undertaken by individuals or by groups at other times of the year either as a hobby or to kill a destructive wild pig (in which case the hunt will be undertaken by a group of people). September is a good month for fishing. The fire has cleared the stream valleys which can now be sown, thus starting off the year's cycle again.

There is no shortage of land, and hence questions of land rights seldom come up in social relations. A village headman has no rights over land outside his village, and even within a village there are strips of bush from which a new garden can be cut. Land is very occasionally sold. For instance a man return-

6:Edwards E-5 (1955-1956)1962
FP13 Mbundu FP13

ing home from labour in October wants cleared fields to sow. If he cannot find any kinsman who would give him a cleared field he will have to buy one, and will have perhaps to pay 200 escudos (£2 10s.). A man retains his rights to fields in a village he no longer inhabits.

The Ovimbundu keep cattle, sheep, goats, pigs, and fowls. The cattle are not milked but are used in sacrifices, and for fines; some have been brought by Ovimbundu from Kwanyama Ambo country but they do not seem to thrive in this neighbourhood. Sheep are few. In my village goats were much less numerous than chickens or pigs. The traders and European residents buy cattle, chickens, and pigs.

Fishing and hunting are practised, but despite the ingenious fish-traps, nets, poisons and weirs used for the first, and the popular enthusiasm for, and ritual associations of the second, neither dominates the actual food supply and ecological background in the way that maize does.

The Ovimbundu believe that the dry-season grass fires also help to fertilize the soil by leaving ashes. Ashes are sometimes spread in a village garden, and dry grass may also be left in a field for this purpose. Soil beside trees is considered to be especially rich, as to some extent are the sites of former villages. There is no idea of crop rotation and a field is worked for as long as it is fertile, that is indefinitely for an *enaka* and from three to six years, sometimes more, for a field of the *ohya* type. The hoe is still the standard means of cultivation and the plough is a rarity.

Coffee-growing on any scale is usually undertaken by people living away from the villages, except for the Protestants who have been encouraged by their missionaries to plant coffee in their villages. Coffee, like maize, is bought by the traders. However, at least two local coffee-growers sold their coffee at Porto Amboim on the coast to get a better price. Basically, the agricultural economy of the neighbourhood is based on maize, grown by methods of shifting cultivation. The frequency with which villages rise and fall and individuals change from one village to another is entirely consistent with this type of agriculture.

Axe and hoe blades, blankets, cloths, clothing, cutlery,